

HONORING THE HEROIC ACTIONS OF FIVE NEW YORK FIRST RESPONDERS IN VALATIE, NEW YORK

**HON. MARCUS J. MOLINARO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the courageous and lifesaving actions of five first responders in Valatie, New York. Early on the morning of December 21, New York State Troopers Joseph Edinger and Nick Norton, Columbia County Sheriff Deputies Stephen Naegeli and Tyler Suchoski, and Valatie Fire Chief Joseph H. Loeffler entered a burning building in Valatie and rescued the three residents trapped inside along with two cats and a dog.

Despite the flames shooting out of the second floor and smoke pouring from the building, these five brave men risked their lives for those inside. For their selfless actions, the town of Valatie has recognized each of them with awards for their heroism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in recognizing the valiant actions of these five brave men and those who supported them. Their quick and courageous response on the morning of December 21 is a shining example of the selfless work our first responders do every day to protect our communities.

REMEMBERING ANN RAPSON

**HON. ERIC SWALWELL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. SWALWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with Congresswoman BARBARA LEE to honor the life of Ann Rapson, an active member of the Piedmont community who recently passed away from advanced-stage brain cancer.

In addition to her professional achievements as an attorney with the Law Office of Louis J. Goodman, Ann served her community, as chairwoman of the Piedmont Park Commission and as a talented glockenspiel player for the Piedmont Community Marching Band.

Furthermore, Ann was an accomplished baker, winning the Alameda County Fair blue ribbon award for multiple pie contests over 15 years, most notably for her chocolate pecan pie.

Ann was also a local political organizer, where she volunteered for candidates whom she felt passionately would provide stable and steady leadership for her community. This has included candidates for district attorney, city council, mayor, and county judges.

In addition, Ann was active in the Jewish community as Vice President and active congregant of Temple Beth Abraham, an American Israel Public Affairs Committee lay leader, and a supporter of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

We're grateful for her leadership in the community and the legacy she created. Ann is survived by her loving family, including her husband David, daughters Pearl Mizrahi and Lilly Rapson, brother Louis Goodman, son-in-law Aron, mother-in-law Ellen Rapson, brother-in-

law Jeff Rapson, and granddaughters Grace and Lilah Mizrahi.

RECOGNIZING MS. SHELLY HINOJOSA AS THE WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**HON. MATT GAETZ**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Ms. Shelly Hinojosa as the 2022–2023 Walton County Teacher of the Year. For nine years, Ms. Hinojosa has served the Walton County School District with exceptional passion and an unwavering commitment to serving others.

In Northwest Florida, we are fortunate to have some of the best teachers in the Nation. Teaching is one of the most difficult yet rewarding professions in existence. Ms. Hinojosa has excelled in teaching her students, while also striving to be an active and supportive member of her community.

Ms. Hinojosa is revered by her principal and colleagues for her willingness to always lend a helping hand. From her fresh ideas and innovative problem-solving skills, her school and students have greatly benefitted from her hard work.

Her support and outreach extend far beyond the walls of her classroom through her involvement as Yearbook Sponsor, College & Career Advisor, School Improvement Team member and School Digital Contact Lead. Moreover, Ms. Hinojosa shows her students each and every day that it is okay to have fun and still demand excellence from yourself. I commend her steadfast willingness to serve those that matter most, the students and youth of our Nation.

For all her admirable contributions, I am truly proud to have Ms. Hinojosa as a constituent in Florida's First Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Ms. Shelly Hinojosa for her accomplishments and her commitment to excellence, professionalism and innovation in the Walton County School District. I thank her for her service and wish her all the best for continued success.

HONORING DR. ANN Y. EASTMAN ELLISON TYLER AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Ann Y. Eastman Ellison Tyler retired from Calvert County, Maryland Public Schools and moved to Kissimmee, Florida in 1991. As a music educator, she was urged to teach again. Her love of music in Osceola County public schools and in the community was evident as she created and nurtured soloists, choruses, and pianists. She rarely turned anyone down when music was needed for weddings, wakes, and funerals—performing with compassion and strict professionalism, many times gratis.

Dr. Tyler hails from the Bronx. Education was the primary family goal. After finishing Manhattan's High School of Music and Art, she earned her bachelor's and master's in music education from Howard University in Washington, D.C., joining Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Dr. Tyler earned her degree in curriculum and instruction in 2002 from the University of Central Florida while teaching in Osceola County. She speaks her mind to students, parents, and the government to improve situations.

Several Osceola committee appointments included affirmative action, charter review, and housing. She is a life member and past president of the Osceola County Education Association—Retired. Dr. Tyler's life achievement awards have come from the Osceola County Branch 5121 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Caribbean and Floridian Association, and the City of Kissimmee. She believes in and supports funding student scholarships.

Dr. Tyler's curriculum has always included American patriotic lyrics, African American gospel and jazz, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American folk songs, and acting and dancing skits from Pre-K, special education, to high school, enjoyed by the children and many parents.

Dr. Tyler has acted in commercials and the Zora Neale Hurston PBS documentary. Since retirement, she authored two books, "Grandma Julia" and "The New Octogenarian: The First 180 Days."

At 84 with two grown sons and her faith, life is full.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GENERAL ALBEN "AL" HOPKINS

**HON. TRENT KELLY**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of General Alben "Al" Norris Hopkins. Al, who passed away on February 12, 2023, was a giant who contributed to his community through his practice in law, military service, and business ventures. His life exemplified leadership, mentorship, and scholarship. He was also known as a man of integrity, work ethic, and faith.

Al was born in Ripley, Mississippi, on February 14, 1941. He grew up in Walnut, Mississippi where he also attended school, graduating from Walnut Center High School in 1959. In addition to being on the Honor Roll, an FFA Star Farmer, and achieving the rank of an Eagle Scout, he was a four-year varsity letterman in both basketball and baseball.

His scholarship included the obtaining of several degrees. He began his studies by attending Delta State University on an athletic scholarship, graduating in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in both English and history. Subsequently, he attended the University of Mississippi School of Law, where he completed his juris doctorate in 1965. In time, he would attend William Carey University, receiving his Bachelors of Biblical Studies. In 2010, he received an honorary Master of Laws degree

from Mississippi College School of Law. Additional theological studies included scholarship through Jerusalem, Israel; the Biblical Archeological Society at Oxford University; Keble College and St. Edmund Hall; and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Once he completed his studies in law, he became part of the third-largest law firm in Mississippi. He would go on to found his own law firm in 1977 in Gulfport, Mississippi: Hopkins, Barvié & Hopkins. He later devoted 13 years of his life as chief judge of the Court of Military Appeals. Additionally, to his own law firm, Al was president of ANH Enterprises and Muddy River Farms.

Al enlisted in military service in 1965, joining the 31st Infantry Division. As part of his military career, he graduated from the Judge Advocate General's School in Charlottesville, Virginia, serving as a Staff Judge Advocate for the Mississippi Army National Guard for over two decades. In his final four years of military service, he was the Assistant Adjutant General of the State of Mississippi. He retired as a Major General in 1996, having earned many awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the MS Magnolia Cross, the MS Magnolia Medal, the MS War Medal, the MS Emergency Service Medal, and the MS Longevity Medal. He was also a Mississippi National Guard Foundation Life Member.

More recently, Al was known for his work with the Mississippi Gaming Commission. He had been reappointed for a third term, which would have lasted until 2025. He had served as both a commissioner and chairman, beginning his service as chairman in 2015.

Al gave to others through the gift of time, being a mentor to many Mississippians. He also gave of his time through being a Sunday school teacher, a man of prayer, and a deacon at First Baptist Church in Gulfport.

Al is preceded in death by his father, Lloyd Carter Hopkins; his mother, Reba Norris Hopkins; his brother, Lloyd Gerald Hopkins; and his daughter, Ashley Anne. He is survived by his wife, Johna Ruth Hopkins, who is from Walnut, Mississippi; their son, Norris Hopkins (Jodie); his grandson, Carter Houston Hopkins; his sister, Lana Moss (Harvey); and his nieces and nephews.

#### HONORING THE WINNERS OF THE 2022-2023 BROWNSVILLE ISD SPELLING BEE

#### HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the winners of the 2022-2023 Brownsville ISD Spelling Bee, with special recognition to Nicholas Torres, who took home the first-place prize.

For those who may not be as familiar with the South Texas region, the Brownsville Independent School District (ISD) is the largest employer in the entire Rio Grande Valley. With an enrollment of more than 40,000 thousand students with a 95.4 percent graduation rate,

Brownsville ISD is thriving thanks to its dedicated faculty and staff.

The brisk February air was not enough to deter the more than 40 contestants who took part in the Brownsville ISO Spelling Bee, as well as the parents, family, friends, and alternates who joined them in the morning of February 4, 2023. More than 30 elementary schools and 10 middle schools were represented in the Spelling Bee, which has been held annually for more than 50 years. Additionally, each contestant was already a winner before the contest even started; every campus has an individual spelling bee, and the winners all competed in this event.

With the spelling bee lasting more than an hour and a half, each contestant made all of South Texas proud. Aime Garcia, from Putegnag Elementary, finished 5th. Javier Ramirez, of Hudson Elementary, finished 4th. Alexandra Garcia, of Manzano Middle School, finished 3rd. And Jack Kocaya, of Stell Middle School, finished second.

For the final two words, Nicholas Torres did not need the definition, part of speech, or for the judge to use the words in a sentence. After lawlessly spelling both bumptious, (self-assertive or proud to an irritating degree) and subsequent (coming after something in time; following) Nicholas Torres, of Egly Elementary, became the 2023 Brownsville ISD Spelling Bee champion.

Mr. Speaker, Nicholas Torres, the rest of the spelling bee champions, and all the educators involved in this year's spelling bee represent the best and brightest in our education system. I cannot wait to see what Nicholas and these bright young scholars accomplish in their future, and I am thankful for all the educators and parents who have given up so much to get them there.

#### HONORING JENNIFER PAUL AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

#### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Jennifer Paul is a lifelong resident of Osceola County. Jennifer is a warrior for bringing awareness to Black history matters in Osceola County and for her involvement in the Whitted Historic Community. In addition to serving in her community, Jennifer has over 15 years of experience in the Department of Defense manufacturing industry, where she currently works full-time.

Jennifer received the Osceola County Women Warrior award in 2022 for publicly sharing Black history from Osceola County of different lifelong icons who have served their community and community pillars. Also, for opening up opportunities for future generations.

Jennifer is a member of the NAACP of Osceola County 5121, serves as the chairperson for the environmental committee, and was recently elected to serve on the at-large executive committee for the local NAACP.

Environmental concerns within her community are another area to be enhanced through community involvement. She continues to advocate for inclusion in her community and equality for environmental injustices.

Bridging the gap between the community and local government is a priority for Jennifer. She also shares this same passion with her twin sister, Jessica, and they have partnered to provide the proper resources to the community.

Jennifer is the second of three children including her brother Justin and a mother to two beautiful daughters, Princess and Precious. Her supportive significant other supports all of her accomplishments. She is very proud of her parents, Larry Paul and Karen Starke-Paul, for instilling great values and work ethics in all of their children's successful lives.

She will continue to build a better community for the residents in the heart of the Whitted Historic Community.

On behalf of Jennifer, she would like to thank those who were involved in nominating her.

#### CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF TONY DEPRIMA

#### HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Anthony DePrima, who is retiring from his position as Energize Delaware's Executive Director on March 17th.

Tony moved to the First State in the 1990's to work for the city government of Dover, the capital of my home state of Delaware. He rose from planning director to city manager, and always kept a special focus on green energy. Tony has been instrumental in bringing renewable energy and environmentally friendly energy production to our state.

Energize Delaware knew that Tony was the perfect choice as their first Executive Director when they brought him on board in 2011. Since then, he has overseen the nonprofit's expansion into several sectors and has had a constant passion for helping all Delawareans live more energy efficient lives. Tony was recently recognized for his work by the Delaware Business Times as Medium Nonprofit CEO of the Year in 2022.

Along with his work with Energize Delaware, Tony is the vice president of the Capital School District Board of Education, the board treasurer of NeighborGood Partners, the board treasurer of Kent County Conservancy, the past president of the Dover Library Foundation, and a member of the Capital City Rotary in Dover. Among it all, he found the time to earn a Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware in 2018.

Tony DePrima's commitment to serving his community and the state of Delaware is nothing short of admirable. I am proud to salute him for his work and wish him all the best in retirement.

#### HONORING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF LINDA VAIL

#### HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 17, 2023*

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the career of a consummate public